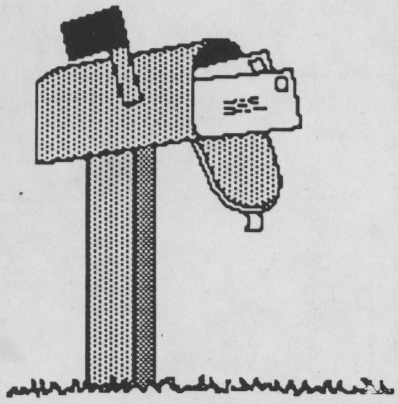

THE TB HOTLINE

news about British actor Tom Baker

published by

THE BAKER CONNECTION
Post Office Box 8363
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Coordinator/Editor: Laurie Yadon

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TOM BAKER--MAN OR MYTH?

As of the end of March Tom had nothing to report regarding work, except that he still makes "little trips to town for voice-overs and commentaries." I'm issuing the first *TB HOTLINE* primarily to make sure all of you know that on April 13, 1988, Reeltime Pictures filmed an interview with Tom which will soon be available on videotape in the U.S., the latest in the *Myth Makers* series of interviews featuring stars of *Doctor Who*. The U.S. version of the tape won't be available until the end of June; however, the British (PAL) version was released in April, and very enthusiastic reviews have appeared in two British publications (*Private Who* and *Doctor Who Bulletin*) indicating that the tape is well worth its $19.95 price tag.

The tape is 60 minutes long and was filmed in East Hagbourne, the site for location filming of *The Android Invasion*. In the May issue of *Doctor Who Bulletin*, Robert Cope wrote: 'The whole presentation is so informal you feel you are eavesdropping on a chat between old friends.... The video is everything I had wanted it to be: funny, nostalgic, revealing.... *Myth Makers* 17 [U.S. tape #8] will be an essential part of any fan's video collection and, for my part, is one of the best pieces of mechandise for many a long year."

Enclosed you should find a flyer containing information about ordering this tape, but in any event you can contact Pleiades Corporation, P.O. Box 83046, Troy, MI 48083-3046 for information, or go ahead and send them a check for $19.95 plus $2.50 (per order, not per tape) for shipping and handling. Be sure to specify whether you want Beta or VHS.

Both Keith Barnfather of Reeltime Pictures (who directed the filming of Tom's interview) and Steven Johnson, president of Pleiades Corporation (the U.S. distributor of the tapes) have been extremely helpful with regard to providing information, photos, flyers, etc. Keith reports that "Tom enjoyed shooting his *Myth Makers* so much that he has suggested a sequel of some kind if sales are high enough on this first production. Needless to say I'm delighted, and we will certainly go ahead if we can--just get your members to buy lots of copies!!!"

[Thanks to Kathleen Toth and Kathy Starnes for providing copies of the aforementioned reviews.]

TOM DOES DICKENS

In November Tom mentioned that he planned to give some Dickens readings again this Christmas. After attending one such reading, which was held on December 21st at an arts center, Colleen Crouch reported: "The event took place in a small hall and was attended by 50-80 people. There were wonderful long ruddy brown velvet drapes behind the lectern, and Tom read *A Christmas Carol* from an edited text which I believe is the same version Dickens read from. He read it well--his voice is admirably suited to Dickens--and it was a very pleasant evening." Colleen also mentioned that Tom's hair was very short, and that he looked well.

Tom has reported that he is "attempting (with help) to devise a 90-minute entertainment based on Dickens' life, times, and work--two 45-minute halves for an evening out for Dickens' lovers." And most recently: "My Dickens interest is still alive. I'm working on the death of Nancy from *Oliver Twist*--it's just called 'Sykes and Nancy.' In its day it caused a sensation when read by Charles Dickens. I've never heard of any other actor trying it--perhaps because it's unworkable nowadays. We'll see."

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Tom writes that "Offers of work continue not to pour in. Ironically, the offers that do arrive do not inspire me to the commitment required for a play. To be invited to leave home for 10/12/14 weeks of touring a revival does not raise my spirits.

"Fortunately, spring is here--the daffodils are in bloom and the cats are restless. I hang a great piece of fat in the apple tree for the birds and this provides occupational therapy for the cats who sit at the foot of the tree, heads cocked and muscles twitching.

"I still receive mail from loyal fans with long memories--some are very jolly indeed."

AUDIO OFFER

What do you know-- BBC Enterprises has issued a two-tape set of audio recordings featuring Tom *and* Colin! Now available from the BBC Radio Collection, packaged together in a plastic box, are a re-release of Tom's 1979 recording of the Terry Nation story *Genesis of the Daleks* plus Colin and Nicola's recording of *Slipback*, which was written by Eric Saward and aired in six 10-minute segments on BBC radio in 1985.

I'm sure that most (if not all) of you are familiar with *Genesis of the Daleks*, since it has been televised. Some of you may not have heard or know much about *Slipback*, however, so here's a brief description of the story which is printed on the package: "Odd events are taking place as the Tardis materializes on board a spacecraft: a mysterious killer stalks the ship's ducting; two dubious policemen are investigating the theft of art treasures; and the computer has taken on its own distinctive personality. Soon the Doctor stumbles on a shocking secret, a secret upon which depends the fate of the entire universe...."

I don't know whether it will be possible to purchase copies of this tape set in the U.S., so I plan to place a one-time bulk order with the help of friends in England. (Thanks, Chris and Colleen!) If you would like one or more copies, send me a check or money order (payable to The Baker Connection) before **June 30th.** The cost of **$15.00** per two-tape set includes air mail postage from England plus the cost of forwarding your tape(s) to you in a padded mailer via first class mail after I receive the bulk shipment from England. Barring unexpected delays, you should receive your tape(s) by mid-August.

[Thanks also to G.R. Grove and Kathy Starnes for information about these tapes.]

RESULTS OF CHRISTMAS 1988 CHARITY DRIVE

A great big "THANKS!" to everyone who contributed to our Christmas 1988 group charity drive. A total of $1710 was collected, $4 more than last year! $850 (£445.34) was donated in Colin's name to the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (36 donations in amounts from $2 to $225) and $860 (£450.67) in Tom's name to Help a Child to See (54 donations in amounts from $3 to $200).

After being notified of our donation Tom wrote "thank you again" and sent his warmest wishes "for anyone who'd like some warm wishes"! Enclosed is a copy of the acknowledgement letter and receipt received from Help a Child to See. Thanks again to all who contributed!

MASK OF MORIARTY IN PRINT

When Joanne Walsh was in London several months ago she discovered that *The Mask of Moriarty* (the play in which Tom appeared in Dublin during the fall of 1985, so delightfully portraying *both* Sherlock Holmes and his arch rival!) has been published by Brophy Books in their *Masters of Irish Theatre* series. If you're interested in obtaining a copy of the playtext (ISBN 0-907-96083-9), you may be able to do so through a drama bookshop or your favorite local bookstore; however, in case you find that you need to contact the publisher directly, their address is: Brophy International Publishing Ltd., 108 Sundrive Road, Dublin 12, Republic of Ireland.

Included with the playtext, by way of an introduction to the play, is "A Playwright's Diary." Hugh Leonard kept a diary from the play's conception through opening night, and it provided the basis for a series of articles which were published in *The Irish Times* -- two shortly before the play opened, and one after. Included are some fascinating comments regarding what it was like to work with Tom!

YO!!

Listen Up!

Effective immediately, the Baker Connection is no longer an SASE-based operation, and I've also given up describing it as an "information service" since everyone else still seems to be referring to it as "the club"! Please read the revised description of this organization which appears below, but the most important thing you need to know is this: If you would like to receive the next *TB HOTLINE*, just fill out the enclosed form and return it to me with $1.

There are numerous reasons for the changes I'm implementing, including the fact that it's costing more than I had anticipated to produce each *HOTLINE*. Instead of the "simple memos" I originally promised, it now looks as if most *HOTLINE*s will contain several pages of material, perhaps some photos, and an envelope and postage are also now provided, so I hope no one will feel that my raising the price to $1 per issue is unreasonable.

The Baker Connection is a fan club for British actors Tom Baker and Colin Baker which publishes two newsletters, the TB HOTLINE (about Tom) and the CB HOTLINE (about Colin). To receive either HOTLINE, send your name and address to The Baker Connection, P.O. Box 8363, Stanford, CA 94309-8363, and indicate whether you wish to receive news about Tom or Colin. Enclose $1 (cash is preferred, but checks/money orders are acceptable), or $2 if you want both HOTLINEs. There isn't a fixed publication schedule; your name and address will be kept on file and you'll be notified as quickly as possible whenever news becomes available regarding upcoming stage, TV, or convention appearances, etc. (but ONLY when there's significant news). With each HOTLINE you receive there will be a form for you to fill out and return, with another dollar, if you wish to receive the next HOTLINE. If you write and request a reply to questions about Tom, Colin, or the club, please enclose an SASE. Any original material in this publication may be reprinted by any not-for-profit organization without further permission, provided that appropriate credit is displayed. The Baker Connection is a member of the APC Net.

Thanks to Keith Barnfather of Reeltime Pictures for lending us these photos of Tom (with interviewer Nicholas Briggs and crew members) taken during the filming of his MYTH MAKERS tape on April 13, 1988

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5th January 1989

Ms Laurie Yadon
The Baker Connection
P O Box 8363
Stanford
California 94309

Dear Ms Yadon,

In Mr Taylor's absence I would like to thank you all most sincerely for the extremely generous donation to the Help a Child to See Appeal fund.

Your continuing interest and support is very much appreciated and I would be grateful if you would pass on our thanks to all the members of the Baker Connection.

With best wishes for 1989.

Yours sincerely,

Penelope Watkins.

Penelope Watkins (Mrs)
Appeal Organiser

SHE DEVIL TO HIT THE BIG SCREEN

Thanks to Lorenia Butler and Rebecca Kane for submitting articles concerning the Orion Pictures film, *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil*, starring Roseanne Barr and Meryl Streep. According to both articles, filming was to begin in New York in April. There was no mention of who will play Father Ferguson, Tom's role in the 1986 BBC production.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Below is a copy of a letter from a fan which was printed in the "Who's Corner" column of the most recent issue (Volume 18) of the *WHOVIAN TIMES*, and next to it is a copy of "Doctor Frog's" response to that letter. Printed on the reverse side of this sheet is a copy of a letter I subsequently sent to DWFCA.

Ron Katz answered my letter on March 24th and said he would "pass [my] letter on to Doctor Frog and suggest he put it into Volume 19." After receiving copies of these letters, both Tom and his agent, Jean Diamond, wrote to thank me for setting the record straight--which hopefully my letter will indeed help to do, if it is printed. However, by printing this material in the *TB HOTLINE* at least a couple of hundred of you will know the real story, even if my letter doesn't make it in to the next issue of the *WHOVIAN TIMES*.

Dear Doctor Frog,

I have been to many conventions where there have been guests from the Doctor Who series there. In fact, I have met all the living Doctors and even the late, great Patrick Troughton. You (or your human counter-part) are the only Doctor I've never met. Why is it that Tom Baker does not do conventions? When the question was put to Mr. Troughton, all he could say was, "it's a wonderful fraternal feeling we Doctors share, even though we poke fun at each other all the time. I don't understand why Tom chooses not to be involved".

I would really like to meet you one day and I'm sure there are others who share the same feeling. Please come out of seclusion from Doctor Who fandom.

Sincerely,

Chi-Chi Wang
Los Angeles, CA

Dear Chi-Chi,

I hesitate to speak for Tom because as you note, I'm only his frog counter-part. I can tell you that DWFCA has an entire file of letters written to Bakers' agent that have not ever been answered! This leads one to beleive there is a real problem with his agent; quite possibly thinking the image is not good for Tom's career (ribbit-ruubbish, I say).

In addition to this, there have, in fact, been conventions that Tom Baker has been part of (mostly put on by Spirit of Life in Chicago) and he charges a pretty penny to be a guest. Perhaps othe convention promoters shy away from him because of the money involved. I think Tom likes the fans; at least he's been very, very nice at the conventions I've hopped to see. There was one in San Jose (Timecon) he came to for free and was a joy; however, there was another he came to in Boston and was paid a fortune where he was outright rude! How do you figure that? I think he's just ill-advised by his agent (from my point of view, she's got fat...ankles, anywho!). May I suggest you take the second best avenue and ring my agent?

On a more serious note, in behalf of the Doctor Who Fan Club of America, who plans to continue convention activity in 1989 (as you will read in this issue), I would like to invite Tom to a DWFCA sponsored convention. Just call me, Tom, and I'll make all the proper arrangements: 303-293-2228; ask for Doctor Frog!

THE BAKER CONNECTION P.O. Box 8363 • Stanford, CA 94309-8363

March 20, 1989

Ron Katz
DWFCA
P.O. Box 6024
Denver, CO 80206

Dear WHOVIAN TIMES Editor and Readers:

There are several comments I would like to make in response to Chi-Chi Wang's letter in Volume 18 of the WHOVIAN TIMES, and Doctor Frog's reply to that letter.

First of all, while it is true that Tom Baker has made no convention appearances in the U.S. during the past two and a half years, he has certainly done so previously. Between May 1983 and September 1986, Tom appeared at 17 conventions in 12 different cities--which I believe is neither vastly lesser nor greater than the number of convention appearances made during the past few years by many of the other Doctors and members of the "Doctor Who" cast.

Doctor Frog's statement that "There was one in San Jose (Timecon) he came to for free and was a joy; however, there was another he came to in Boston and was paid a fortune where he was outright rude!" is at least partially--and perhaps wholly--inaccurate and misleading. I was largely responsible for the arrangements for Tom's appearance at Timecon '86, and I can assure you that he received a substantial fee in addition to all of his expenses. I feel it's important that this be cleared up, because I suspect that neither Tom nor his agent will be particularly overjoyed if they receive a flood of letters from people who feel, after reading Doctor Frog's last column, that Tom should be willing to appear at <u>their</u> cons for free....

Finally, in my experience it is wise to disregard allegations of "rude" behavior--concerning any actor <u>or</u> fan--unless the circumstances surrounding any such incident have been fully explained. In some cases there may have been extenuating circumstances--for example, who (no pun intended) among us has never been a bit short-tempered as a result of feeling ill? During the six years I've known Tom, I've personally never seen him be less than kind and courteous to any fan; in fact, I've consistently marveled at his ability to refrain from being rude to fans who, in my opinion, would have deserved it because <u>they</u> were behaving rudely or inconsiderately.

Sincerely,

Laurie Yadon

Laurie Yadon
Coordinator, The Baker Connection

cc: Tom Baker
Jean Diamond (London Mgmt.)
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